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THE SEDNA CYCLE: A STUDY IN MYTH EVOLUTION

By H. NEWELL WARDLE

Along the shores of the Arctic ocean, from the most easterly point of the North American continent to beyond the confines of Bering sea on the west,—a vast range embracing nearly half the globe,—there has stretched, in historic times, a people whose unity is attested by language, mythology, and culture. The problem of its birthplace and its wanderings is still one of the moot points of anthropology. Basing his study on the linguistic affinity of Eskimo culture-names, Dr Rink laid the foundation of the future solution of this problem ; he, who knew their folklore best, repeatedly denied its historical basis¹ ; only as indirect testimony is it of value.

A broad survey of the field presents in the Central regions a luxuriance of forms and details, diminishing to the east, and passing off to the west into hybrid myths, and customs probably borrowed.

The folktales of a people, like all organic structures subject to rise, progress, and decay, become in time, even when there is no question of crossing with extra-tribal myths, a truly mongrel breed. Any material change in culture or environment begets new types or adds minor features to the old. While it is fairly safe to regard the common meeting-ground of the majority of forms as most approximate to the culture-home, meagerness of detail, on the other hand, is not an infallible measure of distance. Religiosity is markedly influenced by externals. If the struggle for existence absorbs more than a due proportion of time and energy, it does so at the expense of the cult. The admirable completeness of the Baffinland collection is not alone due to Dr

¹ *Tales and Traditions*, p. 87 et seq. *Eskimo Tribes*, vol. I, p. 17.

Boas' patient research: Mr Kroeber's utmost effort obtained only the merest fragments from the Inuit of Smith sound,—this despite the fiction-fostering effect of the long night.

The Sedna myth, apparently absent in Asia, Alaska, and the Mackenzie region, altered in the Ungava district, growing more and more fragmentary as it passes from Smith sound through western and southern Greenland to Angmagsalik, is vital only in the Central regions. Here is presumably its birthplace. Schelling long ago formulated the doctrine that mythology, like language, is a formative element of a people.¹ If this be true, the Eskimo culture-home must be looked for on the coast of Hudson bay, an area most approximate to that locality where primitive and highly developed types are found associated, the specialization having taken place at a time subsequent to the parting of the two great branches, the northward and the westward. Its unimportance or nonexistence in Alaska negatives the theory of a western ethnic area of characterization.

The story of Sedna, or Sana, seems at first sight to center in the creation of sea mammals, but it can be demonstrated to possess another *raison d'être*. A critical examination of the names of its principal actor, the ancient chief deity of the northward branch of the Inuit, sheds much light on its meaning.

Sidne, Sedna, or Sana is clearly formed from the root *sa* ("its front side")² and the demonstrative affix *na* ("one who"), hence, "that one who is before."³

Aiviliajoq (Aywilliayoo, Lyon) seems to be built up from the

¹ Quoted by Prof. Max Müller in his *Science of Religion*, 1872, p. 57.

² From the root *sa* come *sarqaq*, "sunsid" (*gauk*, "light"); *satsigpog*, "is far seaward"; *sane*, "before him"; *salavok*, "suffers from heat"; *sama*, "what is lower or seaward", etc. There seems to be a tendency in central and western Greenland for this root's derivatives to change to *sed* + and *sead* +.

³ While the demonstrative roots used in Greenland indicate that the natives faced the west or open sea to fix the compass points, the terms of direction used in Baffinland are governed entirely by weather. In Greenland, where the open sea lay to the south, the terms, so far as given, show that the natives faced the sea. This results from having a precipitous wall behind. North of the arctic circle they no longer fixed the world-quarters by the rising and the setting of the sun.

root *aiv* ("fetching, giving"), the stem *ilivoq* ("proceeding with regard to time, doing"), and the affix *iaq* ("plenty, a multitude"); or the terminal *joq* may represent Greenland *soq*, the nominal participial ending "one who." Accordingly the range of meanings is: "The periodic giving or bringing of plenty"; "the bringing or giving of plenty of useful things"; "she who brings or gives useful things"; "she who periodically brings or gives."

For the name Nulijok (Nooleayoo, Lyon) there are two possible derivations: first, from *nuliaq* ("wife, a married woman") and *iaq* ("plenty"), hence, "the woman of plenty"; second, from *nuivoq* ("makes its appearance"), *ili* ("periodicity or worth"), and *iaq* ("plenty"), thus, "the appearance of a multitude of useful things," or "the periodic arrival of plenty."

Finally, she is known as Unigumissuitung, "she who never wished to marry."⁶

The character who plays the second rôle in the arctic sacred drama is known usually as Anguta ("her father"), Savirqongs⁶ ("he with a knife"), or Anautalik (Annowtalig, Lyon; "the man with something to cut").⁷ But he has another name—

¹ From the root *aiv* or *av* come *aiva*, "fetches it"; *apa*, "brings it"; *aivak*, *apa*, *ailorpa*, "shares with him"; *avaqa*, "is charitable, benevolent toward him", etc.; probably also *avijarak*, "a pot"; *avat*, "circumference"; *avalerk*, "universe"; *avatdleg*, "farthest outward, the horizon."

² The second stem seems to be derived from the root *ili*, which, through all its derivatives, implies the sense of "worth", "usefulness", both practical and spiritual, as relating to the practices of the *angakut* and to learning in general.

³ From the stem *nuivoq* come also *nuira*, "the sunrise"; *nubuja*, *nuira*, "cloud." The second derivation is to be preferred, though the word, belonging to religion, was probably intended to carry the double meaning—a play upon words. It is interesting to note that the word *nuliaq*, "wife, married woman", is itself probably descended from *nu*, "appearance", and *ili*, "periodicity or worth."

⁴ The nominal participial ending *soq* or *joq*, replacing *iaq*, would make this "she who periodically arrives." The uncertain phonetics of the early transcribers make it questionable but do not alter the necessary deductions.

⁵ From *uinikpok*, "she marries"; (*g*)*umavog*, "wishes or intends to"; *ssuipok*, "never"; noun ending =*ng=k* of the Greenland dialect.

⁶ Also spelled Savikuong; from *savik*, "knife"; (*t*)*joq*, "one who."

⁷ Dr Franz Boas, "The Central Eskimo," in *Sixth Annual Report Bureau of Ethnology*, p. 586.

Napajok (Nappayok, Lyon), from *napiwa* ("breaks it across"¹) and *soq* or *jog* ("one who"), therefore "he who is broken across." All of the old man's names refer to the contents of the myth.

This tells how² —

Savirqong lived alone with his daughter, Sedna, who grew to be a handsome girl, but yet refused to marry.

Finally, with the breaking up of the ice in the spring, a fulmar flew over the water.

He wooed her with fine tales of his home.

She is won and they journeyed together over the vast sea.

Her new home was not of beautiful pelts, but was covered with wretched fishskins, full of holes that gave free entrance to the wind. Instead of soft reindeer-skins her bed was of hard walrus-hides, and she had to live solely on fish which the birds brought.

She wept and pined for home. When the sea was again stirred by warmer winds, the father left his country to visit Sedna. She greeted him joyfully.

Savirqong, in revenge for his daughter's wrongs, killed the fulmar, and, taking Sedna in his boat, commenced the homeward journey.

The father is here a personification of winter; the damsel, the beautiful summertime. The summer is a rover and refuses to dwell in the land of the Inuit.

The fulmar typifies the wind; the *Fulmarus glacialis* is peculiarly a bird on the wing.

The wooing breeze.

The southward flitting of the summertime.

Her new home in the ocean, whence come and whither go the sun and the warmth of summer; her tattered tent of fishskins, through which sweep the ocean winds, her walrus bed, her aqueous food, indicate the entire absence of land other than the ocean floor.

The winter and summer meet.

The radiant greeting of spring.

The northward progress of the sun — the return of summer.

¹ It is significant that the derivatives of this stem include the names for the joints of the body: *navguaq*, "a joint"; *nabloote*, *nablon*, "knee"; *nabgoark*, "member", etc.

² Condensed from Dr Boas' account, op. cit., p. 583. I wish here to acknowledge my great indebtedness to this suggestive work for the versions used as the working basis of this paper.

The fulmars coming home, found their companion dead, his wife gone, and set out in pursuit. Sad over the loss of their murdered comrade, they continue to mourn and cry to this day.

Coming in sight of the boat, they stirred up a heavy storm ; the sea rose in immense waves and threatened the pair with destruction.

In mortal terror the father flung Sedna overboard as an offering to the birds.

She grasped the edge of the boat with a death-grip. Savirqong then took a knife and cut off the joints of her fingers, she clinging more desperately till only the stumps were left. Whales, seals, and groundseals were successively formed from the phalanges. Then the hurricane having subsided because the fulmars deemed her dead, he allowed her to climb into the boat.

Cherishing a desire for revenge, she waited till they were once more ashore, when, calling her dogs, she allowed them to gnaw off her father's hands and feet as he slept.

Aroused, he cursed¹ them all, whereupon the earth opened and swallowed the hut, the father, the daughter, and the dogs. They have since lived in Adlivun, of which Sedna is the mistress.

A notable feature of the Sedna myth is its biennial cycle, in itself a mark of the age of the cult and the youth of the version.

¹ As the Inuit tongue, it is said, contains no oaths, "cursed" must here be interpreted as simply "wished them ill."

A bit of pure natural history has been introduced here and the characteristic note of the bird associated with the wail of the winds.

The autumnal storms. No more typical arctic bird could have been selected to symbolize the bringer of the storm than this cousin of our own stormy petrel.

The sun dips below the horizon : the summer is going.

Whether the order of creation may be traced to the first annual appearance of these animals at the early home of the Inuit, is problematic. More likely it is determined by native fancy and reason. The species and their succession are not constant.

The old man sleeps — the winter sleep of the land : her dogs, the sun's rays, gnaw off the edges of the glacial ice and the icebergs break away, in spring.

This is the Eskimo apotheosis.

As full corroboration of this, Dr Boas has preserved the story as given in an ancient song. It begins with the departure of Sedna in the fall and ends with her death in the following autumn—the true annual cycle of the seasonal myth devoid of later accretions. It varies in a few particulars from its modern descendant. A brother is introduced, but apparently plays no part. Having cut off her fingers, the father pierces her eye—the sun, the eye of summer, the light of her face. He takes her dead body ashore and covers it with a dogskin, thus burying the last vestige of summer beneath a mantle of snow. When the flood comes in it covers Sedna, and the cosmic ocean has taken the summer to itself.

She is described by the *angakut* as very large,—an attempt to represent greatness by size. She is scarcely able to move,—a transference of the winter condition in her absence to her in her home in the ocean which is frozen over.

Savirqong is also a cripple, and appears to the dying, whom he grasps with his right hand, which has only three fingers—the chill hand of death; the right hand, a sign of power; three-fingered from the three main winds which the winter rules, east, north, and west.

The association of this arctic goddess with the ocean realm has originated many rigid religious observances, a discussion of which lies beyond the scope of this paper.¹

Lyon's portrayal² of Nuliajok, or Sedna, in her home shows a transition to the Greenlandic story of Arnaquagsaq. She is the

¹ The taboo relative to the working of deer- and seal-skins, extending as it does even to Alaska, seems to point to a former wider range of the Sedna myth. The legend of the origin of walrus and reindeer tells how Sedna, having created the deer, "became frightened and ordered it to run away, but the deer turned upon her and would not go; she became angry and knocked out its teeth. It turned round at once, but before it could leave she gave it a kick which lopped off its tail." (Boas, *op. cit.*, pp. 587–588.) This is native natural history, not mythology. It is combined with an attempt to account for her dislike of deer. Since she has no deer in her ocean home, it follows that she must dislike them.

² *Private Journal of Capt. G. F. Lyon*, London, 1824, p. 362.

mother and protectress, or rather the ruler, of sea animals, which she occasionally withholds, i. e., in times of dearth, late seasons. These she grasps in her right hand, the dexterous hand; and to secure them, the *angakoq*, who has visited her for that purpose, strives to cut it off. According to the joints severed is determined the kind of game obtained. This is extremely characteristic of primitive logic; that the gods may give it is necessary, by symbol and drama, to remind them of the thing desired and the manner of its first bestowal.

On Smith sound they tell how a woman began to devour her sleeping parents, who fled from the *igdlo*. Her father, returning for a knife, carried her to the boat, and from her fingers that he chopped off over the gunwale sprung the sea mammals.¹ They also tell of "Nerivik ('place of food'), who lives beneath the sea. When the seals fail to appear an *angakoq* visits Nerivik and combs her tangled hair, whereupon, she releases the seals and they come up."² But here, among the most northerly tribe on the globe, the winter has almost vanquished the summer, and the father, in his character of Torngaxssung (the Great Shade), has assumed a prominence unknown in the Central regions. So important did he become in the extreme north that, after the invasion of the milder district of western and southern Greenland, he is still the supreme god, relegating his daughter to a minor place. This, as Arnaquagsaq³ ("the very old or great woman"), she amply fills.

Briefly, the story⁴ refers to a woman who represents the source

¹ A. L. Kroeber in *Four. Am. Folk-lore*, vol. XII, p. 179; also *Bulletin Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.*, vol. XII, p. 317.

² *Ibid.*

³ In Baffinland, Nanoquagsaq (Spicer), a dialectal variation. Boas, p. 587.

⁴ From *arnaq*, "woman, mother"; *ssuaq*, "great or very"; *ssaq*, "grand, magnificent." Or from *arnaq*, "woman"; *ssuaq*, "great"; *sag*, "the front side"; hence, "the great woman in front." The other derivation gives an emphatic form. The word is in everyday use with this meaning. The words for "old" and "great" are identical.

⁵ David Crantz, *History of Greenland*, London, 1767, vol. I, p. 206; also Boas, *op. cit.*, pp. 586-587.

of nourishment and whose abode is the ocean depths. "She sits in her dwelling [the visible world domed by the sky], in front of a lamp [the sun], beneath which is placed a vessel [the ocean] which receives the oil [the rain, etc.] that keeps flowing down from the lamp [a typical Eskimo figure]. From this vessel [the ocean], as well as from the dark interior of her hut [the world beyond whence come the birds, etc.], she sends out all the food-animals. These she sometimes withholds, because certain noxious parasites have fastened themselves upon her head [the symbol of the storm-clouds of a late season]. She is relieved by an *angakok* who visits her"—the function of all primitive priests, to change the weather by prayer, i. e., by passing out of themselves and journeying to meet the gods. His way thither lies along that famous mystic road, traversed only by the seer and the dead, which leads down the slope of the sky and over the edge of the world.¹

As Ildiragijenget ("she who sleeps in the house of the wind") she is ruler of the underworld, Adlivun.³ She and her father occupy opposite sides of a large house. Since their apotheosis they must live in the same place but keep apart that summer and winter may not get mixed. Savirqong, scarcely able to move, lies on the ledge and is covered with old skins—the frozen condition of the wintry, snow-covered world. Like his daughter he has but one eye,—the moon. The dead, seized by Anguta, are carried thither and must remain a year, lying by the side of the old man,

¹ Brinton, "The Journey of the Soul," in his *Essays of an Americanist*.

² From *igdllo*, "house"; *j* (Central) = *ss* (Greenland); *sinigpok*, "he sleeps"; *ag*, "wind" (*agssoq*, "the wind-side"; *saq*, "the front-side." Around the root *ag* are grouped stems embracing the idea of "keen", "sharp", "the touch"). The word is very irregular, seemingly, but I trust I have not erred.

³ "The place below", from *at*, "below", and the locative *vun*, *vik*. Though the term may have this meaning now, I believe its true derivation is from *agdlak*, "striped, streaked"; hence, "the place which is striped or streaked," i. e., the west. The other future world is now *Qudlivun*, "the place above," from *qut*, *qule*, "the upper part, above." It is safe to derive it from *qauk*, "light"; *lik*, "having"; *vik*, *vun*, "the place which";—"the place having light" (originally the east). The Inuit terms of direction are extremely loose, and the pressing of the western horizon to a point beneath resulted in the elevation of *Qudlivun*. The relation of these names to *Adlet* and *Qudlunait*, respectively, is patent.

who pinches them ;¹ i. e., about as long as the body would hold together exposed to the elements — the pinching cold of winter. Across the threshold lies Sedna's dog, — the rough western, later the southern, horizon.² The well-nigh universal association of the dog with death is largely in evidence in the Sana cult,³ and links it to the diurnal and seasonal myths all the world over.

Not without significance is the occurrence in Baffinland of a yet older and strangely allied myth, side by side with the Sedna tales. The most constant of the stories gleaned by travelers and students has been that of the "Woman Who Married a Dog." Because of its distribution it must be considered as very old, if not, in fact, the most ancient of them all. Yet the fact that from the first the European has been greeted everywhere by the Inuit by the name of one of its actors, "Qudlunait," has occasioned considerable surprise.⁴ Strangely enough, it was not until the appearance of Fru Rink's article⁵ that any serious attempt was made to interpret it, and I might have been content to accept this had not my own linguistic essays forced me to a different rendering.

An analysis of the woman's names in this connection throws no light on the tale, since it refers us back to the tale for their meaning,—Niviarsiang, "the girl"; Uinigumissuitung, "she who never wished to marry."

The same is true of the father's names: Anguta, "her father"; Savirqong, "he with a knife."

That of the dog husband is more instructive. Ijirqang, from

¹ Compare with Lyon's account of the stages of the underworld where the idea of the low and narrow grave seems transferred to the after-world (p. 273). The ancient belief seems to be that the soul lingers for some time near the body before its descent to "Adlivun." The features seems to be a blending of the two.

² Compare with Lyon's description and with the dog husband of Uinigumissuitung.

³ In western and southern Greenland the head of a dog was always placed by a child's grave (Crantz, vol. I, p. 237) because the little dog could lead the way to the great dog's home in the west. Compare with the custom among other Amerind tribes (Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, 3d ed., pp. 279, 288-290).

⁴ See, for instance, *Eskimo Tribes*, vol. II, p. 27.

⁵ "The Girl and the Dogs," *Am. Anthropologist*, vol. XI, 1898, pp. 181, 209.

the stem *ikipa*, "kindles it", and the noun-ending *kaq* (*ng*), "having large"; hence, "having the great fire."¹

Among the Eskimo of Smith sound the children are of at least five kinds: Qavlunait (Europeans), Nakassungnaitut (?), Wolves,² Tornit (giants), and Inugandligat (dwarfs). In Baffinland and in western and southern Greenland there are but two sets—Qavdlunait and Adlet or Erqigdlet;—while in Angmagsalik, eastern Greenland, the number increases to three—Kavdlunait, Timerset (Inlanders),³ and Erkilit, with the tacit inclusion of the Inuit themselves. ("The Timerset come at night into the harbor to catch seals, and people can hear them there whistling and rattling, and they say to them—'ye may not do your cousins any harm.'")⁴

Qavdlunait, from *quagdlok* ("pure white"), may be translated "pure white people," or "the very white ones."⁵

Apparently Adlet is descended from *at*, "below," thus giving "those below"; but may it not be considered as a degenerate form of the stem *agdlak*, "striped, streaked," hence, "the striped ones"? This is a very appropriate term as now applied by the Inuit to the ruddier Amerind tribes to their westward, who doubtless painted. Erqigdlet ("nit people,")⁶ the equivalent of Adlet, must be regarded as a contemptuous epithet bestowed⁷ when their

¹ From the root *iki*, *iji*, are derived *ikumavoq*, "it burns"; *ingncq*, "fire"; *ingnagpoq*, "he has got fire"; *ignik*, "iron pyrites." Compare, for consonant change, the stem *iku* (Labrador), *iju* (Central).

² The inclusion of wolves alongside of Qavdlunait is an argument against the rendering of that word by "wolves" as Fru Rink does.

³ From *time*, "central part": "*timerdleg*, he who dwells farther up the country."

⁴ G. Holm, "Sagn og Fortællingen fra Angmagsalik," *Meddelelser om Grønland*, rode Hefte, p. 291: "*Timersek*'erne komme om Efteraaret ned til Havet for at fange Sæler, og Folk kan da høre dem fløjte og dundre, og sige saa til dem: 'I maa ikke gjføre Eders Fættene nogen Fortræd!'" It is worthy of mention, in this connection, that the word *tungyu*, used by the northern Alaskans for "white man," is traceable to *tunga*, a term expressing kinship: *tunka*, "kinsman"; *tunki*, "cousin."

⁵ From this stem, *qaak*, "light," come *qarsorpok*, "turns pale"; *qasserpok*, "gray"; *qagorpok*, "is white"; *qava*, "south," etc.

⁶ From *erqiq*, "a nit."

⁷ It is a matter of common observation that past or passing fear manifests itself in the calling of uncomplimentary or distorted

more warlike neighbors were no longer feared, partly from a sound resemblance, partly as a reference to their dog ancestry, the Eskimo dog being peculiarly the home of unwelcome guests. The transition is from description to contempt.¹

In the light of these meanings the story as given by Dr Boas may be interpreted as follows:

Savirqong, an old man, lived alone with his daughter Niviarsiang, or Uinigumissuitung.

She refused all her suitors.

At last a dog, Ijirqang, spotted red and white, won her affections and she took him for her husband.

They had ten children, five Adlet and five dogs (Qudlunait). Ijirqang did not go out hunting.

When the children grew up, they became very voracious and it was difficult for Savirqong to feed them.

At last the grandfather grew tired of it, put the whole family into his boat, and carried them to a small island.

Every day Niviarsiang hung a pair of boots around Ijirqang's neck, and he swam across to fetch meat.

But Savirqong, instead of giving him meat, filled the boots with heavy stones, which drowned the dog while attempting to return to the island.

The man must be considered as the personification of the visible circular world; the girl as the sun.

The sun does not marry and settle down.

The west.

The sun's rays, the red western and white eastern. The west is always in the west.

The sun's rays feed upon the ice and snow of the world.

Their transference to the west. According to another version, she fled to the island in the first place and there the children were born.²

The red glow coming across the water.

The glow sinks to the horizon and dies out. In another version, he is dragged down but manages to swim across.³

¹ Fru Rink (op. cit., p. 181) gives the ordinary reference of *Adlet* to *atlat* "others." Dr Boas' words, "five Adlet and five dogs," are quite capable of this reading, but it must be considered secondary, arising from phonetic similarity. The Adlet are known to the Inuit of Smith sound, though not expressly stated as descendants of this couple, being confused with Inuit living to their west. (Kroeber in *Bulletin Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.*, op. cit.) ² Kroeber in *Journal Am. Folk-lore*, vol. XII. ³ Ibid.

In revenge for her husband's death, Niviarsiang sent the young dogs to her father's hut and let them gnaw off his hands and feet.

In return Savirqong, when she happened to be in his boat, threw her overboard and cut off her fingers when she held to the gunwale. As they fell into the water they were transformed into seals and whales. At last, he allowed her to climb into the boat.

Fearing that her father might think of killing or maiming her children, she ordered the Adlet to go inland, where they became the ancestors of a numerous people.²

She made a boat for the young dogs, setting up two sticks for masts³ in the soles of her boots, and sent the puppies across the ocean. She sang "Angnaijaja! when you arrive across the ocean, you shall make many things giving you joy. Angnaija!" They arrived in the land beyond the sea and became the ancestors of the Europeans.

The ice is broken away and melted by the heat of the sun's rays. In eastern Greenland the grandfather comes in his kayak to bring food. The children, having eaten the food and the kayak, at their mother's command devour him;¹ i. e., when the ocean is frozen over to the horizon, first the sea ice is broken up and later the glaciers.

This is borrowed from the Sedna myth. The lack of coherence with this story stamps it as extraneous. It is absent in every one of the Greenland versions.

The western rays, later the redder Amerinds.

The eastern rays. The white light of morning has everywhere been looked upon as the bringer or producer of all things useful and pleasing.

¹ Holm, *op. cit.*, p. 291: "Moderen havde sagt til dem, at de skulde spise Bed stefaderen. Da Børnene havde spist Madvarerne op, slikkede de Kajaken og aad den. Derpaa toge de fat paa Bedstefaderen og spiste ham."

² Fru Rink comments on the selection of a willow-leaf for the Erqigdlet boat, deeming its narrow shape unsuitable. Two reasons determined the choice: the long slender ray and the form of the kayak. It is probable that before their contact with Europeans, with their broad, shoe-shape vessels, both sets of children were launched upon leaves.

³ A late introduction due to the ships of the real, not the mythical, Qavlunat.

A noteworthy feature of this myth is what may be called its temporal index. It is clearly a day cycle, and as such dates back to a culture-home south of the arctic circle. Subsequent to the late rise of the proto-Sedna myth¹ the passage of the Inuit across the line brought the diurnal and the annual cycles into close relation. The recognition of their affinity resulted in a mutual borrowing—the introduction of the dogs into the Sedna story, the animal creation into that of the “Girl and the Dogs.”

It is beyond the province of this article to do more than to refer briefly to the distinctively Amerindian type of this series. While it displays a broad and strong relationship to religious thought all the world over, its deepest affinities are rooted in the characteristic mentality of the red race. That certain analogous dog tales are reported from the folklore of other peoples is no more to be wondered at than the absence of myths parallel to the Sedna cycle from the cosmogonies of the rest of mankind. The unique geographical position of the Inuit has given to some of them a mythology peculiar to themselves.

¹ The existence of the annual myth, much altered and eroded among the Inuit of the Ungava district (Turner in *Eleventh Ann. Rep. Bur. Ethnol.*, pp. 261-262), vouches for one of two things,—the rise of a proto-Sedna myth prior to the coastwise migration northward into Labrador peninsula, or else the crossing of the strong current of Hudson strait by the Central Eskimo, carrying the arctic religion into a land sufficiently temperate for its significance to be lost. A bulwark of the latter hypothesis is the extremely close relation of the two dialects. On the other hand, the wide extension of deer and seal superstitions attests the great age of the seasonal cult.